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# Citizen Participation Plan

Council Bluffs Community  
Development Program

3/11/02

# **CITIZENS PARTICIPATION PLAN**

The primary objective of the Council Bluffs Community Development Program is to develop a viable urban community, with stable neighborhoods, by providing decent housing, suitable living environment, and expanding economic opportunities, principally for persons of low income. The purpose of this Citizen Participation Plan is to set out procedures to assure that all citizens have an opportunity to be involved in the community development process. It is the City's intent to allow and encourage all citizens to be involved during the preparation of each program component and to be informed prior to the time of any official action by the City Council.

## **1. Citizen Participation**

### **a. Community Development Advisory Committee**

This Plan provides for a Community Development Advisory Committee to assure broad-based community involvement and to assure that those groups within the community which may be most directly affected by various community development programs are represented in the Annual Plan and Consolidated Plan development process. The Advisory Committee will service as a forum for receiving public comments and providing information to the public on the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of the City's Community Development Program. Further, the Advisory Committee may be utilized to provide comment and recommendations on other related programs.

The Advisory Committee shall be comprised of five (5) members that are residents of Council Bluffs. Members may be nominated by various groups and organizations, by members of the public, or by the Committee. All appointments will be made by the Mayor, with the concurrence of the City Council. Additionally, appointments will be made with an emphasis placed on persons that are involved in housing, community development or low income services. The Committee will adopt its own by-laws and rules of procedure. The Community Development Department will provide technical assistance and administrative support for the Committee. The term of office for each member will be four (4) years. If for any reason a member leaves the Committee, a replacement appointment will be made for the remainder of the unexpired term. At the end of a regular term, a member may continue to serve until re-appointed or until a successor is appointed.

### **b. Publication Requirements**

Citizen involvement is an on-going function of the community development process. Meetings and public hearings will be held periodically throughout the year to advise the public about the program, to discuss planning and project proposals, and to solicit comments about community development policy. A notice will be published in the legal section of the Nonpareil not less than five (5) nor more than ten (10) days prior to the meetings or public hearings. Public Hearing notices may also be sent to a listing of organizations and groups that represent the social, economic, neighborhood and business groups that may have an interest in the program. This listing will be developed by the Advisory Committee.

**c. Public Access**

The Community Development Department will schedule meetings at sites that are accessible. Special measures will be taken to assure an opportunity for involvement by low income persons, the elderly, handicapped and disabled persons, minorities, and civic and business interests.

**d. Meetings and Hearings**

The following public hearings will be scheduled during the program year:

i. Citizen Participation Plan - This document establishes the procedures to be followed by the City to assure an opportunity for citizen involvement in the community development process. This Plan will be periodically reviewed by the Advisory Committee.

ii. Consolidated Plan - The Consolidated Plan is a collaborative process whereby a community establishes a unified vision and application for community development activities using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and Home Investment Partnerships (HOME) funds. The Consolidated Plan will be presented to the Advisory Committee prior to submission to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). However, community development needs and priorities contained in the Consolidated Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to determine if amendments are appropriate.

iii. Annual Action Plan - The purpose of this meeting will be to provide the following information to citizens: 1) The total amount of Community Development Program (CDBG and HOME) funds available for the coming program year, based on estimates made available from HUD; 2) The range of eligible activities and a summary of activities that have been funded in Council Bluffs; 3) The process to be followed in the preparation and local approval of the annual action plans, including the schedule of meetings and hearings; 4) Other program regulations or changes in regulations; and 5) The role of citizen involvement in the Community Development Program, including the receipt of project and program proposals from community groups and organizations to be considered for inclusion in the Annual Action Plan. Individuals and groups submitting proposals for special projects will be allowed to present their requests to the Advisory Committee for review and comment at least one Advisory Committee public hearing.

The Annual Action Plan is a precise and itemized listing of activities, including a narrative description and a cost allocation for use of funds. Prior to submission to the City Council for approval, the Annual Action Plan, as recommended by the Community Development Department and Community Development Advisory Committee, will be made available for public comment. Any amendments to the Plan during the program year will be presented in the same manner used for the initial adoption to allow an opportunity for public comment.

iv. Annual Performance Report - This document includes a summary on the status of all community development activities funded by the City in the previous program year. The Annual Report represents the annual evaluation of the local program. The Advisory Committee shall hold a public hearing on the Annual Report, prior to submittal to HUD.

## **2. Meetings**

In addition to the scheduled public hearings, the Advisory Committee may hold other meetings as necessary to further their duties and responsibilities.

## **3. Citizen Comments and Information**

### **a. Access to Information**

Citizens will be informed that comments are invited at the meetings or may be presented in writing. All written comments will be made available to the Advisory Committee. Comments and questions will be accepted throughout the year and should be addressed to: Director; Community Development Department; City Hall, 209 Pearl Street; Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503.

Citizens, public agencies and other interested parties including those most affected, shall be permitted the opportunity to receive information. Program records, files, and information are confidential to the extent provided by Chapter 68A of the Code of Iowa. Information not protected by this chapter, or otherwise specified by federal regulations to be public information, will be made available upon request.

All component documents which make up the content of the Community Development Program in Council Bluffs, including but not limited to: the Grantee Performance Report; Annual Action Plan; the Consolidated Plan; and neighborhood or special project plans will be available for public viewing in the Community Development Department. All written comments on any of these documents, received by the Director of the Department, will be responded to in writing in not less than fifteen (15) working days from the date of receipt. All comments and copies of the response will be placed in the appropriate contract file in the Department.

### **b. Technical Assistance**

The Community Development Department staff will provide technical assistance and support to any organization or group which may request it. That assistance may be limited to activities that are directly associated with the Community Development Program. Specific assistance may be provided in the planning, development, and implementation of projects or activities. The staff may also assist in preparing proposals for funding.

Department staff members will be available on request to meet with any organization or group to discuss the policies, projects, or activities of the Community Development Program. Such meetings are encouraged to: 1) provide program and policy information; 2) share comments; and 3) answer questions about community issues.

**c. Interpretive Services**

Upon request, the Community Development Department shall provide interpretive services for non-English speaking and hearing impaired individuals and groups. The arrangement and costs of such services shall be incurred by the Community Development Department. A 48 hour advanced notice will be required for these services.

**d. Objections and Complaints**

If a citizen wishes to make a complaint or grievance about any matter relating to the Community Development Program, they may do so by writing to: Director; Community Development Department; City Hall, 209 Pearl Street; Council Bluffs, Iowa 51503. All letters of complaint will be responded to within fifteen (15) working days after receipt.

Citizens may contact HUD directly if they wish to object to any part of the Community Development Program, or if they feel that they have been aggrieved by any program, activity, or procedure funded through the Community Development Program. Such objections should be made to: Director; Community Planning and Development Division; Department of Housing and Urban Development; Omaha Office, Region VII; Executive Tower Centre; 10909 Mill Valley Road; Omaha, Nebraska 68154-3955.